

Why Women In Sports Get Paid Less?

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Contributor

As a female student athlete, I have struggled to decide what I want to pursue with my life. I've always liked sports, but I was never able to imagine making it my job due to how undervalued women are in sports. The pay for women and men should be equal. Especially in sports, where women already exert as much effort as men do, if not even more, while still being underappreciated. And how does the sporting industry justify that? Maverick NBA club owner Mark Cuban once said when called out about the pay gap between men's and women's professional basketball players by Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) player Skylar Diggins-Smith: "The difference is the total amount of revenue. It's not a gender issue. It's a revenue issue." (Ferro). Although men's sports traditionally bring in more money, this is rarely thought upon. Is it because men produce things of a greater quality? Could it be that men's sports demand more skill? Is it because men typically outperform women in international sports? And all these questions pop up so let's find out.

Employers are typically not allowed to discriminate against employees based on their sex when setting salaries under the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Furthermore, the Fifth Circuit ruled in *Diaz v. Pan American World Airlines, Inc.* that employers cannot discriminate based on consumer preferences unless those preferences are necessary for the corporation to fulfill its primary purpose or service. This Article makes the case that consumers' willingness to watch women play sports is negatively impacted, limiting their potential for income generation, because women in sports directly oppose ideas of femininity. Hence, by paying women less money based on income, leagues, teams, and governing bodies are potentially breaking the Equal Pay Act by discriminating against female athletes and coaches.

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by Polina Svetailo on February 14

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There are so many people in the industry and coaches in NCAA league that getting overlooked. For example, Marianne Stanley, former University of Southern California (USC) Women's Basketball Coach, filed a lawsuit alleging that USC Athletic Director Michael Garrett violated the Equal Pay Act. The court applied a two-step test to determine if the jobs were "substantially equal". USC argued that the job of the men's coach was substantially different due to greater revenue generating responsibilities and media and spectator pressure, while Stanley countered that USC had not invested in or promoted the women's program as much as the school had promoted the men's program. The court accepted the defendant's affirmative defense that the pay differential was due to the fact that Raveling's experience and qualifications far surpassed those of Stanley.

The salary gap in sports is not just a money issue because customers have a significant impact on how much money a team can make. As it is impossible to say with certainty that racial, sexist, and homophobic consumer preferences are the only causes of the disparity. Regarding this issue of today is a step in the right direction toward ensuring that female athletes receive the compensation they deserve and advancing the cause of gender equality in sport.

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References

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